WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 SEPTEMBER 1993

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

PATRICIA AUSTIN TO HEAD WCHS IN 1993-94; SUSAN WINEBERG VICE-PRESIDENT; BOARD MEMBERS NAMED

Past-president Patricia Austin was elected to head the Washtenaw County Historical Society for 1993-94 at the annual meeting in May.

Patricia Austin previously served as president 1982-84 and 1987-88.

Susan Wineberg is vice-president and program chairman, Judy Chrisman, recording secretary, Louisa Pieper, corresponding secretary, Patty Creal, treasurer, and Pauline Walters, immediate past president.

Elected to three-year terms on the board were Art French, Nancy McKinney, Karen O'Neal and Peter Rocco.

Appointed directors at large for one-year terms were Terri Bartholomew, Thelma Graves, Deborah Hildebrandt, Joanne Rebeck and Donald Smith, M.D. Directors-at-large appointed to two year terms are Gail Bauer, Rosemarion Blake, Shaw Livermore, Jr., A.P. Marshall and Maya Savarino.

Continuing on the board are Elizabeth Dusseau, Lucille Fisher, Marjorie Hepburn and Alice Ziegler (terms expire 1994) and Janice Bhavsar, Bets Hansen, Arlene Schmid and Esther Warzynski (terms expiring in 1995).

Karen O'Neal, who preceded Pauline Walters as president, presented Pauline a "mission improbable" award and silver star pin for "her Herculean efforts on behalf of the society as president, membership chairman, bulk mailer, troubleshooter etc.."

GREAT LAKES BANCORP, VOLUNTEERS HELP WCHS EARN $1,762 AT ART FAIR, SPREAD WORD ABOUT MUSEUM

Many thanks to Great Lakes Bancorp for allowing WCHS to park cars during the Art Fair evenings and all-day Saturday when the bank is closed. WCHS earned $1,629 parking cars at $5 each.

Many thanks also to the volunteers who parked the cars and to those who staffed the information booth. The latter spread the word about our museum-to-be and also cleared $130 selling museum shop items.

Peter Rocco coordinated parking. Bets Hansen, chairman of the museum shop, coordinated the booth. Pauline Walters was volunteer coordinator for both projects plus she helped with daily setting up and taking down of the booth.

Parking volunteers were Yvonne Allen, Rosemarion Blake, Trudy Bulkley, Ann Copeman, Patty and Bob Creal, Marjorie Cripps, Angela DelVecchio, Dick Dunn, Elsie Dyke, Mark Enns, Lucille Fisher, Karl and Amy Lagler, Ken Mayne, Nancy McKinney and Karen O'Neal.

Others were Duane Rorabacher, Maya Savarino, Don and Jean Smith, Jay Snyder, Raymond Tanter, Pauline Walters and Alice and Lawrence Ziegler.

Booth staff besides Mrs. Hansen included Terri Bartholomew, Grace Kortesoja, Joanne Brougher, Beth Caldwell, Patty Creal, Judy Chrisman, Marjorie Cripps, Elizabeth Dusseau, Thelma Graves and Hilda Kurtz.

Other booth volunteers were Marjorie Reade, Duane Rorabacher, Maya Savarino, Arlene Schmid, Grace Shackman, Esther Warzynski, Dotty Wilkins, Susan Wineberg and Alice Ziegler.

TV-VCR DRIVE AT 76%; KEEP SENDING SLIPS

WCHS has collected 25,429 points or more than 76 percent of the 33,283 points needed to earn a TV-VCR by collecting points from Bill Knapp's restaurants.

Anyone who eats at Knapp's may request a yellow points slip from the cashier each time with one point given for each dollar spent. Please keep collecting and give or send to Alice Ziegler, 537 Riverview Dr., Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

ALL ABOARD FOR ANN ARBOR RAILROAD PROGRAM SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Daniel McClary, an Ann Arbor attorney with a strong extra-curricular interest in the Ann Arbor Railroad, will present a slide talk about the railroad's history at 2 p.m. Sunday, September 26, in the multi-purpose room of the Ann Arbor Public Library.

The September speaker's love affair with the Ann Arbor Railroad began when he once had a summer job as a brakeman with the railroad.

Please note that this, the first fall WCHS meeting, is scheduled the FOURTH Sunday. Other meetings are planned on the third Sunday--October 17, November 20, February 20, March 20 and April 17. No meeting planned December or January.

The schedule change was made not to conflict with the Old West Side house tour September 19.

HEARING ON NOMINATION OF MUSEUM AS INDIVIDUAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

A hearing about nomination of the WCHS Museum on Main Street as an individual historic district was held Tuesday, August 24 at City Hall.

President Patricia Austin, Pauline Walters, immediate past-president, and Rosemarion Blake, a director, spoke in favor. Several WCHS members attended and asked questions.

The Individual Historic Properties District Study Committee, which had completed its preliminary report on the nomination, held the hearing. Their report will next be submitted to the Ann Arbor Planning Department and finally City Council.

Backers feel historic district status will protect the museum. If City Council approves the nomination, permission from the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission will be required to make changes on the building exterior. Repairs do not require permission.

MICHIGAN'S RESTORED CAPITOL

LOOKS LIKE 1879, PERFORMS FOR 21ST CENTURY

ARCHITECT TALKS ABOUT CAPITOL RESTORATION

Photos courtesy of Quinn-Evans

MICHIGAN CAPITOL UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN 1870S

Lots of people, over the years, have wanted to have their picture taken on the main east steps of the Michigan State Capitol when they visited.

"Upon investigation, we found the brick arch below, supporting the steps, had totally collapsed, said Steven Jones of the Ann Arbor architectural firm, Quinn-Evans, who helped with the recent restoration of the Capitol

A team also went in and found a lot of the cast iron ribs supporting the dome were either broken or cracked. "It's sort of amazing that the dome was still there," Jones told the WCHS audience in a slide talk at the annual meeting in May. The talk was a preview of the annual bus tour, this year to visit the restored Capitol building in Lansing.

Richard Frank of Saline was the coordinating preservation architect who prepared a master plan. Three architectural firms were involved in implementing the actual restoration work, two from Ann Arbor.

Quinn-Evans worked on the exterior and the governor's suite of offices on the first and second floors. Architects Four, also of Ann Arbor, worked on the Senate area. A Bay City firm worked on the House and center court or rotunda areas.

"The Michigan Capitol building, inspired by the national Capitol, played a pivotal role in the design of capitol buildings in other states and established its original architect as one of the most important of the post-Civil War era.

"A place where all the laws have been passed to govern the state for more than 113 years, the building's associative value makes it the state's most important building," Jones said.

The restoration budget was pre-determined at $58 million and the work was to be completed in three years. The building was to be kept open during restoration to lawmakers, staff and the nearly 100,000 tourists who visit a year, primarily children.

Suspended ceilings throughout the building hid original ceilings. Almost all records of previous changes to the building had been lost.

"Decorative paint research involved recreation of original patterns and colors on nearly nine acres of wall and ceiling surfaces, resulting in one of the finest displays of late 19th century decorative painted art in the nation.

"In areas where surfaces had never been overpainted new techniques were developed to achieve museum quality conservation of deteriorated original paint.

"Finally, light fixtures, etched glass, hardware and furniture, where missing or damaged, were replicated from surviving artifacts and archival photographs.

"Most challenging was creation of a functional work place without violating the building's historic character. Modern heating, ventilating, air conditioning, lighting, plumbing and fire protection--all had to go in the building."

Also state-of-the-art computer and electronics communication systems were installed under a raised computer floor, rendering them unobtrusive, accessible and flexible for future update.

"The national Capitol was done by William Thornton in 1792. Between 1851 and 1863 two wings were added for congressional chambers and a cast iron dome set on.

Jones showed slides of original construction, the completed Capitol, before and after restoration and work in progress.

"Over the years, weather and inappropriate maintenance had tended to deteriorate the sand stone so it lost all its detail and ornamentation had been damaged."

"They ran tests on how to clean the building effectively without damaging the historic stone. They also visited a working quarry in Ohio and brought back samples to compare color to the cleaned stone. The original quarry had been closed many years but Berea sandstone , originally used in the Capitol, runs down through the center of Ohio so they were able to obtain needed replacement stone.

"The legislature originally wanted to use Michigan copper on the roof if the whole roof would come within budget and also not cost more than 25 1/2 cents a pound. While it would have come within budget it cost a cent or two more per pound so they used tin instead. It leaked from day one. They kept applying more roofs."

Quinn-Evans did a life-cycle cost analysis of roofing materials and determined that copper would be the most cost effective over the longest periods. They tore all the old roofs off down to the basic structure and re-roofed it with copper.

Quinn-Evans also was involved in the restoration of the dome's exterior and the stability of its interior. The dome is sheet metal attached to cast iron ribs around the perimeter.

Their team found that a lot of the ribs were broken or cracked. They also found that the radial support beams on the exterior were deteriorated and no longer structurally sound.

"The dome was intended by Myers to

APPEARANCES DECEIVING

When they originally built the State Capitol they allowed important people to have real walnut, but to control costs, others got pine, but they painted the grain to look like walnut.

The whole building looks like walnut but only a portion really is.

be the same color as the rest of the building. Sometime in the 1950s it was painted white, which a lot of people liked, but it was really not appropriate." The legislature accepted their argument that it should be changed back.

They stripped the dome's paint down to bare metal. They did a number of tests on various paint systems--their flexibility, their adherence to metal, chose the most appropriate and painted the entire dome.

"Originally there were a number of urns around the dome and the perimeter of the roof or balustrade. Everyone had been taken off. The only original urn left was sitting in the backyard of the state architect who had been in charge of the building for a lot of years. He loaned it to us to replicate."

Cupolas over two air shafts at each end of the building also were taken off. Elevators went in those shafts. They replicated the cupolas from a drawing and put them back on the building.

Quinn-Evans replaced the original outdoor light fixtures with the aid of historic photos and one remaining lantern in the state museum. Six original light posts survived at north, south and west entrances. Color analysis of paint layers revealed the outdoor lights had originally been two colors--reddish brown and the color of sandstone.

Restoration started on the fourth floor on the Senate side. The Senate decided to find out what the process would be and if it would work. They found it successful and decided to go ahead.

"The legislative chambers hadn't been quite as destroyed as the rest of the building. Still, they had been painted different colors over the years and lost some of the original grandeur."

A consultant and her team analyzed the entire building for original colors, patterns, stenciling, gold leafing.

"We were fortunate in the governor's wing to have the only historic documentation left about the whole building to tell us what some of the spaces in his office originally looked like."

An early drawing from *Harper's Magazine* shows the governor's reception room prior to the decorative wall painting which they think was done in the late 1890s or early 1900s. Historic photographs in the state archives show the reception area with furniture. Others show the governor's office over time. One shows Governor Sleeper signing the women's right to vote bill in 1917, another Governor Groesbeck in 1921.

When Quinn-Evans started on the governor's offices there had been drop ceilings put in, partitions built, large rooms cut into small rooms. Additional offices were made from corridor space.

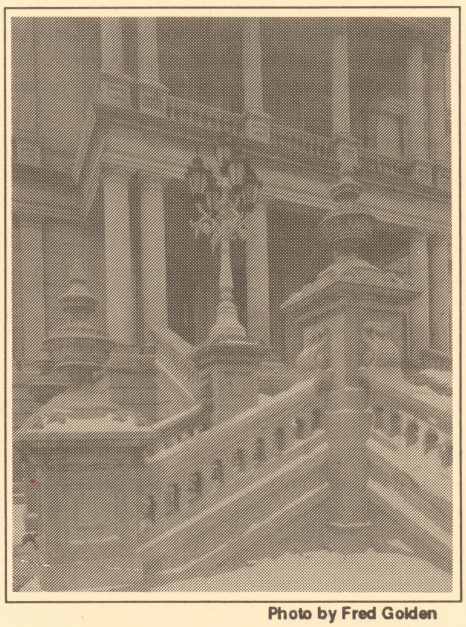

Photo by Fred Golden

RESTORED EAST ENTRANCE

The original floor to ceiling heights were about 20 feet. Overfloors were put in at ten feet to make two stories of one. They did this throughout the building. All overfloors were removed in the restoration.

In Governor Blanchard's conference room you could see the ceiling cutting a window in half. In his office a set of large doors had been made into a bookcase.

Paint was painstakingly stripped, layer by layer, down to the plaster so they knew which was the first layer. Original stenciling and decorative painting were exposed. They put on tissue paper overlays and drew out the pattern. They took color chips and analyzed the colors, so when they restored the plaster they could come back and repaint the original decorative painting.

"We were fortunate in the governor's office to have some existing ceilings that had never been overpainted. There were other small alcoves that had been retained and times when the restorers tore off a ceiling they found painted ceilings that had never been touched.

"The entire wood floor structure was removed so that we could upgrade the entire building to let it function as a 20th century state-of-the-art government building.

"We did this by pouring a flat concrete slab which we put the computer floor on. Then we could run everything we needed under the computer floor--plumbing, electrical, computer wiring, cable, speaker systems.

"They'll forever be accessible and as functions and offices change, it's a minor thing to take up the carpet, pull up a tile and make whatever change you need.

"The computer floors were slightly higher than existing marble corridor floors so we created a sloped threshold in bluestone, the original threshold material.

"Plaster destroyed by overfloors couldn't be saved but we wanted to save the plaster in the governor's office and reception room. Old plaster tends to break off from the lath. In some cases they could fasten the plaster back with screws, plaster over it and paint it." He challenged anyone visiting the Capitol to find those areas.

"Unfortunately, Governor Blanchard was sitting at his desk one day and a piece of plaster fell on his desk. He immediately called the construction manager who had already started on the restoration and demanded that his ceiling be replaced as it was falling down.

"The decorative painters had not got to that ceiling yet to do their analysis but you can't really say no to the governor, so the ceiling was removed.

"I guess the part that fell was the only part that was loose. With the new ceiling we either had to leave it plain, which would be out of place, or come up with a design that would be compatible with the rest of the building which we did. The cornice and stenciling just below the cornice is original.

"Where we could save crown moldings we did. If it was damaged, we cut out the damaged portions and replicated it to match.

"All woodwork was totally stripped so that it could be refinished. Where damaged, it was replaced with new walnut or pine.

"When they put overfloors in, they had to modify the windows. Quinn-Evans restored the windows to their original double hung one-over-one condition.

"We knew there had been a fireplace in the governor's office because of a photo. We had the decorative painters strip the wall where we thought the fireplace went. The entire outline of the fireplace was revealed. They replicated it.

"There had been another fireplace in the governor's reception room according to photos. We found the overmantel in the state museum storage but the mantel itself had been used in a state museum exhibit.. We compared the photo of the mantel which had been in governor's reception room with the one on display in the museum and found it was the original mantel, which we replicated."

A pair of doors that had been in the room had disappeared. They were able to replicate them from an original architect's sketch.

They located an original chandelier in southwest Michigan which had been cut in two but neither owner was willing to part with them. Later they found two similar ones.

From photographs and a list in the

state archives they knew about some furniture that had been in the governor's office. They found that some of those pieces had been placed on loan in Honolulu House in Marshall. They got them back.

If the governor is not in his office when tourists come, the doors are open and people can look into the rooms over a glass railing. Except for the conference room, the two governor's rooms are closest to their original appearance in the whole building.

Employees displaced by the removal of 50,000 square feet of overfloors moved to the Senate and House office buildings nearby. Only the governor, lieutenant governor, legislative chambers and certain members of the senate and house remain in the restored Capitol.

WCHS GROUP TOURS CAPITOL

The WCHS tour of the Michigan State Capitol Building June 19 started with a historical video, 'Michigan's Capitol, The Symbol Renewed."

"Our state is to build a new State Capitol this year. There are to be four entrances to the building--north, south, east and west. The main building will have two wings and a large dome, similar to the US Capitol in Washington," the video begins.

"The engines to warm the building are to be placed under the stone steps of the main entrances so, if they burst, the steps go up and not the building. It is to be built of stone and iron. The main floors are of marble."

"October 2 (1873) dawned bright and promising. The crisp fall air was alive with anticipation. For days wagons and trains had poured into Lansing bringing people to the capital city.

"More than 30,000 citizens came from around Michigan to witness the laying of the cornerstone for the new Capitol. It would be 30 years before Lansing would see such a throng again.

"Capitol square was festooned with flags. Garlands hung from construction derricks jutting above the crowd. Marchers converged on the square from all directions."

They were celebrating the construction of Michigan's third Capitol. The first was a brick Greek temple in Detroit, the second a wood frame building erected in Lansing in 1847 when the capital was moved there.

"The end of the Civil War saw burgeoning population and developing economies linked to tremendous growth in state government. The times demanded larger, safer and more dignified quarters for conducting state government."

Citing growing incapacity of state buildings, insecurity from fire of state records and the several years time needed to build a new Capitol, Governor Baldwin in 1871 asked for immediate action. "The Board of State Building Commissioners announced a competition for architects to design a building which would house and celebrate Michigan's government."

"That some competing architects lost their drawings in the Chicago fire and the deadline for entries had to be extended underscored the need for a fire safe building.

"The winning plan bore Michigan's motto, '*Tuebor,*' meaning 'I will defend.' It was the work of an enterprising carpenter turned architect from Springfield, Illinois, Elijah E. Myers.

"He had designed other public buildings--courthouses, city halls and schools and touted them as fire safe but he had never before designed a capitol.

"The building rose floor by floor until the dome dominated Lansing's skyline. It would be six years before the completion date could be chiseled into the cornerstone.

"His success assured, Myers would continue as an architect for another 45 years. He would design capitols for Texas, Colorado and Idaho and erect public buildings in almost every state."

Tour guide Lillian Smith welcomed the WCHS group. They took the elevator to the third floor Senate Appropriations Room.

"The original price of the Capitol was $1.5 million dollars, the restoration price, $58 million. If we had not gone with restoration we would have tripled that price. When we figured how much each tax payer in Michigan paid for the restoration it was $6.50 once in the last ten years.

"Up to 1970 this Appropriations Room was used as the Supreme Court but in 1970 Michigan built a law building. Then the judges moved out and the room was converted to use by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

"As you look up you can see a sign, 'Supreme Court.' With a restored building you have to keep the original titles.

"In the 1950s and '60s when they started to make our Capitol over into a more modern looking building by adding subceilings and over floors, this room was never touched.

"Its original ceiling was sagging and had to be bolted back up. It is one of two original ceilings . The other is in the governor's reception room.

"The chandeliers are replicas. The original Supreme Court chandeliers were sold to the capitol building in Ohio. When we went to Ohio to buy our chandeliers back they said no so we had to make replicas.

"The wall decoration is not actually fresco but we don't have a name for it. It was something Elijah Myers did on his own. The walls are done in plaster and hand painted right onto the walls. There was no wallpaper.

"We wanted to go completely American and we wanted to hire all Michigan companies first. But we were not able to find artists familiar with this kind of art work in America. Artists from the Netherlands came here and trained artists to do the work you see in the Capitol.

She pointed out cupboards of English walnut in the room and a 114 year old grandfather clock put back into use. "The cupboards are the only English walnut in the Capitol. The rest is Michigan walnut or pine, stained to look like walnut."

Before the restoration, modern camera lights were installed in all the public rooms, she said, for safety and to save the clutter of equipment brought by the media.

Desks along the side are original. The

TRIALS AND SUCCESSES OF REPLICATING SENATE CARPET: TRUTH EMERGES FROM CHICKEN COOP

"The carpet we are standing on in the Senate Chamber is the original design," the guide said. "We like to refer to it as the chicken coop carpeting."

"In 1988, when we started the restoration of the Senate Chamber, the only thing we had to go by to determine what the original carpet looked like were badly damaged old black and white photographs. We ran them through computers to get a sharper image but we weren't sure what the colors were.

"So we just determined colors by what the room originally looked like and made the replica.

"After it was completed a lady came to the Capitol with a piece of the original carpeting in hand.

"Her grandfather had worked for the State of Michigan. In the 1950s when the carpet was changed, he took a piece of the old carpet home to his church in Flint. When they were getting rid of it, they gave it to his daughter and told her to store it.

"She tried to get rid of it but no one wanted it. After MSU refused it, she put it in an old chicken coop for storage until she heard rumors of the Capitol restoration.

"Comparing the original with the replica, the only mistake we had made in designing the replica is that one of the flowers in the center where the clumps are is more rounded in the original than we had made it. The colors were correctly duplicated.

"We are going to use the replica until it wears out and then replace it with carpet of original design."

front desk is a replica. A portrait of the first Supreme Court Justice hangs in the room.

"Unfortunately, in the 1950s and '60s when they sold a lot of original furnishings or stored them away, a lot of them were damaged. We were able to purchase back a large part of the original furnishings or get them out of storage. But some who bought them didn't want to part with them so we had to make replicas."

The carpeting is of original design. The replica was made by Bigelow, the company that made the original carpet in the 1870s.

The leather had cracked on the original doors leading into the Supreme Court room so they made new ones. Doors that lead into the Senate and House Chambers are original, she said.

The high desk in back where the Supreme Court judges used to sit is no longer used. (There used to be five judges, now there are seven.)

On the way out of the Appropriations Room, she pointed out that the door hinges have the Michigan coat of arms on them. There are also 20 chandeliers on display in the building with the coat of arms, 19 of them original.

"In the 1950s, the chandelier hanging outside the House of Representatives came crashing down on the second floor. They picked up the 600 pound chandelier and put it in a warehouse. The warehouse burned down. They thought the chandelier was bad luck and wanted nothing more to do with it. They never made a new one.

"When we started restoration we wanted to find out why the chandelier had fallen and of what grade of copper it was made. In 1872 Michigan was known as the copper state because of all the copper found in the Upper Peninsula. We were always told the chandeliers were made of copper.

"When they investigated they found no trace of copper. They were made of lead and iron. The reason the chandelier had fallen was because the screws had rusted out over 114 years. The only reason the other 19 were still hanging was because of the electrical wires holding them.

"We made sure they were bolted back on. We made a replica and hung it outside the House of Representatives.

"The Michigan coat of arms has an elk and a moose on it. They were chosen because they are very strong animals and they thought Michigan was a very strong state."

She pointed out a portrait of Zachariah Chandler, a founding father of the Republican party which was founded in Jackson, Michigan. He was a US congressman but never worked in state government.

In the Senate Chamber, she noted that Michigan has 38 senators, currently 21 Republicans and 17 Democrats. Traditionally, Republicans sit on the right-hand side, Democrats on the left. That's where we get the terms 'left wingers' and 'right wingers.'

Of 38 desks, 30 are original, eight are brand new replicas. The eight originals were damaged when they were stored.

Photo by Fred Golden

RESTORED MICHIGAN CAPITOL, NIGHT-LIGHTED

Michigan was the first state to adopt a computerized voting system on the Senate floor. The only other state to use computerized voting today is California and they've only had it in use a year. To hide the computers they made small roll top desks set in an ell shape with the regular desk of each Senator.

The computer screens are sensitive to touch. All you have to do to vote is touch the screen--green is a yes vote, red, a no vote. White is to cancel or change it.

"General Lafayette did a lot of work in the Revolutionary War and, in honor of him, Michigan had his portrait painted and placed in the Senate Chamber even though he never set foot in the state."

There is also a portrait of Austin Blair, nicknamed "the war governor" because he was governor during the Civil War.

The chandeliers in the Senate Chamber are original. The lead drop crystals were imported from Czechoslovakia.

"Once a year we lower the chandeliers and clean them. It's a six-hour process for each chandelier. Each crystal piece is taken off, individually dipped in a solution, wiped off and hung back up. They replace all light bulbs whether they need to be changed or not. Then they are raised back up. The chandeliers weigh about 1,200 pounds a piece."

She pointed out a little circular bar that goes around the chandeliers. Between each light bulb is a little hole in the bar, a gas jet. In 1879 when our Capitol used to run by gas, these chandeliers were just like a gas stove.

New etched glass ceiling panels display coats of arms of all 50 states. Original panels were taken down and thrown away years ago. (While there weren't 50 states when the Capitol was built, they thought Elijah Myers would have wanted all included.)

"There is also something that was not there before. If you look at the United States coat of arms and count down to the third panel you should see a bridge.

"Even though our building has been restored to the 1879 time period we wanted to put something of our generation in. They had a contest in 1990 for what best represents the State of Michigan. A 15-year-old girl from Traverse City thought nothing represented Michigan better than the Mackinac Bridge. She drew a picture, wrote an essay and submitted it.

The Capitol committee was so impressed they had her original drawing etched on glass and put in the ceiling. They also gave her a $2,000 bond.

Two thousand dollars was also the amount Elijah Myers received for his work. He designed the building and the original furnishings.

The Michigan coat of arms is directly over the Lieutenant Governor's desk in the Senate and the Federal coat of arms is at the entrance. They are similarly placed in the House of Representatives.

Before the restoration the Senate carpet was blue with the Michigan coat of arms design repeated up and down the aisles. That carpet was auctioned off.

Turning to the center or rotunda section, she said the dome is off limits to the public for safety reasons. Because of narrow passageways they wouldn't be able to evacuate the building in time if they had a fire.

"When Elijah Myers designed our building in 1872, he wanted to make it unique by giving it a glass floor that was an optical illusion.

"If you were to stand on the highest balcony where the stars are and looked down at the glass floor it would look like an upside down dome. The higher you climb the deeper it appears, the closer you get to it, the flatter it has become.

Portraits of former governors hang around the rotunda on the second and third floors. As each governor finishes his term, he is asked to have his portrait painted and donate it to the Capitol. The empty spot is reserved for Governor Blanchard. We hear rumors that his portrait is being painted.

"We have Governor Milliken, the longest term serving governor in Michigan, Governor Romney, first to be elected to a four-

year term instead of two, and Governor Swainson.

"Swainson's portrait looks as if it is incomplete. He had that done on purpose. He was the second youngest governor in the history of Michigan. He wanted to make two statements, one, that his tour of politics was not over with and he felt that politics itself was not completed.

"Governor Mennen Williams or 'Soapy' Williams was noted for his bow ties. Governor Kim Sigler died in an airplane crash that he piloted himself. His family had his portrait painted with an airplane in the background."

Other governors she mentioned were Kelly, Van Wagoner, Dickinson, Fitzgerald, Murphy, Groesbeck, Brucker and Warner. The oldest governors' portraits are moved elsewhere in the Capitol as new ones are added in the rotunda.

"If you look up in the dome, some people have asked me if those are the wives of former governors. Those ladies are painted as allegories or symbols. We do not know who painted them.

"A year after our Capitol opened, some of the legislators had gone outside and there was an artist on the side of the street painting. They commissioned him to paint the eight ladies of Michigan.

"The artist never thought it was important enough to sign the portraits and the legislators never thought it was important enough to document his name in any of the old journals.

"We are trying to determine who painted them. We think it might be an Italian artist who was in America at the time.

"When we went up there at the time of restoration, we realized that the way they were nailed in , if we had pulled them out we would have damaged them, yet they needed to be restored.

"We started on the glass floor below us and had 40 tons of scaffolding built 150 feet into the air to do the restoration. Then we ran into another problem--the ladies were so dirty and damaged, the only thing we could use to clean them initially were cotton swabs (Q-tips).

"Artists had to climb 150 feet into the air every day with pouches of Q-tips to restore the eight ladies of Michigan. They were painted as Greek goddesses.

"The one with a pink skirt on and a cloud on her head represents art, one with a blue skirt, education. 'Travel' has wings on her head and a sailboat, 'Industry,' an anvil, 'Justice or Law,' scales in her hand, 'Science,' a microscope and a globe. The other two are 'Communication' and 'Agriculture.'"

Original; elevators installed in 1880 ran by hydraulics. You could see the water go up and down. While the elevator was restored back to what it looked like they were not allowed to run it by hydraulics because they felt it was unsafe.

The marble floors of black and white squares in the corridors are original. The marble came from Vermont.

"By 1987 the Capitol building had violated every code in the State of Michigan. The state was advised to tear it down and build a new one or fix it. They had to install a fire sprinkler system throughout. That was costly and hard because they wanted to hide it so it wouldn't look modern.

"All the overfloors and subceilings were unsafe. If you had been in the Capitol before restoration, you could actually feel the extra floors shaking..

"Where there were overfloors they called it '2 1/2' and '3 1/2' floor. Some employees worked in cubicles in hallways with no windows, just four walls around them. At one time, the one Capitol building contained all state government."

Entering the House of Representatives Chamber, the guide said we have 110 members, each representing about 250,000 people. All the desks are original except ten. Earlier estimates of how many representatives Michigan would have in the future were off by ten, she said.

In the center of each desk is a little console with voting buttons. The colors indicate how they are voting. The votes show up on four boards on the front wall.

The person who presides over the House is called the Speaker of the House. Because the party representatives are now evenly split, we have two speakers, Rep. Hillegonds, Republican, and Rep. Hertel, Democrat. They change off month to month.

Portraits in the House include Stevens T. Mason, the first governor to be elected to office in the State of Michigan, Lewis Cass, Hazen Pingree and Douglas Houghton. Mason was called 'the boy governor." Prior to being elected state governor at 24, he was appointed territorial governor at 19. Later he was a general in the army.

"Cass designed the Michigan coat of arms and Cass Avenue in Detroit is named for him. Houghton was never governor but he was the first state geologist and he found a lot of copper deposits in the Upper Peninsula.

"The artist thought that the spirits of the Indians were with Mr. Houghton and he included a ghostly boat with Indians in it in the background, but you can't really see it unless you are close and look carefully.

"Over the Speaker's desk we have the Michigan coat of arms and the coats of arms of all 50 states in the ceiling. The chandeliers are original. They were imported from Czechoslovakia.

"Around the edges are domes that were used as a form of ventilation in 1879. Over the years they never bothered to take care of them. In 1988 we found them very cluttered. There were huge stepladders in them that had been used on the roof. They must have been there 50-60 years. They were cleaned out and closed off. They don't need them with central heating and air conditioning.

"Governor Lewis Cass ran for president but never made it. We've only produced one president from the State of Michigan--Gerald Ford. His portrait is on display outside the governor's office."

The group headed to the first floor where the glass floor is located. "You can see it is completely flat. There are 976 pieces of glass tile in the floor, 926 of them are 114 years old, 50 of them are new."

"We didn't lose them because we had large groups on the floor and it caved in. We lost them because of accidents. In the 1930s there was a fire. The flames got so hot they cracked some glass tiles and we had to replace them.

"Then during our restoration, we would have people on the second and third floor looking down with cameras or tools in their hands. As they were leaning over the banisters they would accidentally drop them.

"Things falling from a distance increase speed and gain momentum. When they hit the glass tiles they cracked them. We had to replace them. It's a very sturdy floor. The glass is about 1 1/2 inches thick.

"The columns that you see in the hallways are made of cast iron, painted to look like marble. Also walls throughout the Capitol are made out of plaster, painted to look like marble.

"In actuality, the only marble in the building is on the corridor floors and in the cases that display the flags. The flags are replicas of Civil War flags.

"We did have original Civil War , Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II flags. When we took the original flags out during the restoration, the older ones were literally turning to dust in our fingers. They have put the original flags in an airtight room in the historical museum where they are to stay because they are beyond repair. The World Wars I and II flags can be restored".

Replicas of 26 Civil War flags have been made and placed on display. The original 24th Infantry Brigade flag was carried at President Lincoln's funeral.

"When we look up into the dome from the

SENATE ROOM RESTORED TO PROPER COLORS

Before restoration the Senate Chamber walls were green and white. They are now blue and gold.

When they scraped through nine layers of paint they found the chamber was originally blue and gold.

A lot of people here in Lansing wanted it to stay green and white (Michigan State University colors) but the committee put its foot down and said it has to be the original color.

The guide, an MSU student, noted that the University of Michigan blue is darker than the blue in the senate.

glass floor we are 175 feet away from the blue top. If you dropped a tape measure all the way from the top of the dome to the ground floor, our Capitol is 267 feet tall.

"If you look at the blue top there are stars in it. Over the years we were told two things the stars are supposed to have meant. First, that they represent the day the Capitol opened (January I, 1879). Then we were told the stars represent the state map and if you look very carefully you'll begin to see outlines of the mitten and upper peninsula.

"We had an astronomer go up there and study the stars. He said they don't mean anything at all, there is no pattern to them.

"When we looked through Elijah Myers old journal we found he just wanted people to think of the sky. Myers designed everything in the Capitol. The only thing he did not do is choose the color scheme. That was done by various artists after the building opened.

"It took Myers almost one and a half years to design the Capitol. It took six years to build and six years to restore.

Next tourgoers reboarded the bus for a drive-by tour of notable buildings in Lansing. Then they had lunch at Clara's Restaurant in a restored railroad depot and toured the Turner-Dodge House, a mansion under restoration by the City of Lansing.

The main portion of the Turner-Dodge House was built 1853-58 in Greek revival style by James Turner. Two central stories were balanced by one-story wings on each side. (A sketch of it reminds one of the Baldwin-Hall house on Hill Street at Washtenaw in Ann Arbor.)

Turner, born 1820 in New York arrived with his family in the Lansing area in the late 1830s. He worked for a local tavern owner until he earned enough money to build the first frame house in Lansing and open a general store at the corner of present day Turner Street and Grand River Avenue.

James married Marian Monroe of Eagle, Michigan, and had a son, James M., and three daughters, Marian, Eva and Abby. The father helped found the Michigan Female College, now site of the Michigan School for the Blind. He also was involved in construction of the Howell to Lansing plank road and Ionia to Lansing railroad.

Turner's daughter, Abby, married Frank L. Dodge, a practicing attorney, from Ohio in 1888. They purchased the home from Turner's widow the next year. Dodge, a Democrat, served in the Michigan House of Representatives and as US Court Commissioner. He also was city alderman 12 years and served on several civic boards.

Between 1900-06 Dodge hired local architect Darius Moon to enlarge and redesign the house to accommodate 11 family members.

It became a three-story eclectic style house with an additional two-story west wing and porches. It featured stately wooden Ionic columns and a decorative cornice.

Inside the additions included a master bedroom, guest room, Mrs. Turner's bedroom (she remained in the house), billiard room, central ballroom, baggage room, maid's room, walk-in dressing room, pantry and a new kitchen wing. The original kitchen was in the basement.

The house remained in the family until 1958 when it was purchased by Great Lakes Bible College for a residence hall. In 1974 the City of Lansing bought the 8 1/2 acre site for a park. There was a lot of talk about tearing the house down but the Historical Society of Greater Lansing was very aggressive about trying to retain it, according to the guide.

The City of Lansing started renovating the house for public use. With a grant they set four men to strip all the woodwork. Walls were papered, though not with patterns of the appropriate period. It opened to the public in 1979.

We now have a master plan for the house by Architect Richard Frank of Saline and are in the process of acquiring additional land for parking., she said.

People used to come and ask how many of their tax dollars were paying for the house. They found that the cost was one-quarter the cost per square foot of two modern community centers in Lansing.

The house has walls 12-18 inches thick. When they acquired a grant for storm windows, they were able to lower the heat bill from $900 to $200 a month in the coldest months.

FALL FESTIVAL SEPT. 25

The annual Webster Fall Festival will be held all day Saturday, September 25, at Webster Corners, Farrell and Webster Church Roads. A variety of events are planned, concluding with a pig roast dinner.

QUICK! HAVE YOU ANY MEIJER'S $50 COUPONS

Local Meijer's stores have been issuing coupons this summer to anyone spending $50 at one time each week for 12 weeks since June 9. A set of any nine of the coupons may be turned in no later than September 18 for a $50 gift certificate. Would anyone who has an incomplete set or even one or two please call 662-9092 immediately? Object: a complete set to benefit WCHS.

STATE MARKER DEDICATED AT 1830S CONANT HOUSE

A State of Michigan historical marker was dedicated July 25 at the John Wesley Conant house, 5683 Napier Road in Salem township, by descendants and the Salem Area Historical Society.

The simple Greek Revival house, built in the 1830s, has been home to five generations of Conants. It is "virtually unaltered since a wing was added in the 1870s."

John Wesley Conant and wife, Alice, came from New York to Michigan in 1833 and built the house soon after near Denton in Wayne County.

The property was condemned as part of the Willow Run Bomber Plant site during World War II and the family moved the house to its present location.

It is presently occupied by Herbert Conant, a great-grandson, and his wife.

The marker says "it remains an excellent example of architecture from Michigan's settlement period."

MUSEUM APPLIES FOR NATIONAL REGISTER

Students of Professor Ted Ligibel of Eastern Michigan University had the "real life" project of researching and preparing the detailed information required to nominate the WCHS Museum on Main Street for the National Register of Historic Places.

Professor Ligibel spoke briefly at the annual meeting. He called our museum house "a good example of Greek Revival as expressed in southern Michigan and an example of early residential architecture in the settlement period. The house is a series of structures erected in the 1830s."

Moving a building is a negative for historic designation but it wasn't moved far and it was moved to an old part of town, he noted.

He thinks the building deserves recognition. He left a copy for our files. It was on its way to Lansing. It will take anywhere from a year to 18 months for a decision, he estimates.

WCHS GIFTS RECALL FARMER'S AND MECHANIC'S BANK, SHERIFF PETERSON, 1893 ANN ARBOR STREET SCENE

How many readers remember the old Farmer's and Mechanic's Bank or when George Peterson was Washtenaw County sheriff?

Recent gifts to the Society, announced by Nancy McKinney, collections chairman, bring them to mind.

Emma Mason of Sutton Road, Northfield township, donated a metal letter opener embossed with "Farmer's and Mechanic's Bank, Ann Arbor, Michigan."

She also gave a black glass ashtray, lettered "George A. Peterson, Washtenaw County, Michigan" with a sheriff's badge symbol.

Kurt Neumann of Chelsea gave a brown metal tray with an 1893 photo of Main Street, Ann Arbor, north from Liberty Street, with a similar 1963 post card taped on, among other things.

Marjorie Hepburn of Chelsea gave a small wooden table top semi-revolving display case for use in the museum shop.

CERTIFICATES OFFERED

Hand-lettered certificates are offered free of charge, framed if desired, by WCHS to organizations (businesses, churches, schools, etc.) for milestone anniversaries (100-150 years). Information: 663-8826.

COMMITTEE SEEKING INFORMATION, HELPERS

Collections chairman Nancy McKinney asks anyone who knows the whereabouts of WCHS artifacts stored elsewhere than in our regular storage to call or write her. Her phone number is 665-5171. Her address is 1104 W. Madison, Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

Her committee also needs car or van drivers to pick up donations or drive to the storage building for work days, help moving heavy artifacts and sorting of artifacts in storage.

HOW TO JOIN

Send name, address and phone number with check or money order payable to Washtenaw County Historical Society to: WCHS Membership, c/o Patty Creal, Treasurer, 2655 Esch Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

Annual dues are: students, seniors (age 60+), $10; senior couple (one 60+), $19; individual, $15; family/couple, $25; patron, $100; association, business, $50. Information: 662-9092

LAWN EDGER NEEDED

The garden committee has been taking care of the museum grounds this summer, planting flowers, weeding, mowing.

Anne S. Benninghoff, coordinator of volunteers, is still seeking a volunteer to do edging. Her phone number is 741-4320.

Helpers this summer included Patty Creal, Ella Grenier, Lois Foyle, Karen O'Neal, Pauline Walters and Nancy Major. Several others have indicated an interest in the committee.

THANKS TO MERCHANTS, CONTRACTOR, KIWANIS

WCHS thanks Detroit Edison Company, Hertler Brothers, Inc.. and Nielsen's Florists for donation of flowers to beautify the Museum on Main street this summer.

The Edison Company gave us 130 tuberous begonias. Hertler's and Nielsen's gave several kinds of bedding plants.

The picket fence has been installed, adding to the beauty of our corner at Main and Beakes. Post-hole digging was slowed significantly when diggers ran into many rocks in the ground. Ann Arbor Fence donated the cost of the extra time and effort needed and we thank them.

Several members of Western Kiwanis, led by Alan Dailey, have spent many hours on the hottest days, first priming and then painting it. We are most grateful.

TRAVELING EXHIBIT GAME OFFERED SCHOOLS, GROUPS

WCHS offers a traveling exhibit of small artifacts set up as a humorous "What is it?" game to schools for children and another for adults. They are available for classes and meetings subject to volunteer availability. For information call Arlene Schmid, 665-8773.

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Published September-May, except Dec. & Jan.
WCHS Office: (313) 662-9092

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANN ARBOR RAILROAD HISTORY

2:00 P.M. • Sunday September 26, 1993

Ann Arbor Public Library Multipurpose Room 343 South Fifth Avenue Ann Arbor, Michigan

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